

CLASS OF 1822

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PRESBYTERIAN.

minds of the Board turned with entire unanimity upon Dr. Mason; and he would undoubtedly have been chosen, but that he would not allow his name to be put in nomination.

As a preacher, I may safely say that he had few equals. Others may have possessed more vigour of imagination, and greater powers of extemporaneous speaking; but for a firm grasp of truth, and the ability to conduct an argument with logical accuracy, and to throw the conclusion into the brightest sunlight—for what Cousin calls the mathematics of thought, he had scarcely any equals. Herein lay his great strength. Men listened to his argument as they would to a demonstration in Euclid, or to an analysis in Algebra, and were bound fast by it. His sermons were prepared with great care. He was not wont to bring other than beaten oil into the sanctuary. Even his weekly lectures were carefully prepared, and were usually delivered from a brief before him. In his preaching he dealt much with the conscience of his hearers. He made the law of God speak out. Men saw their obligations and felt their guilt, and were thus urged to seek a refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The death of Dr. Mason threw a general air of sadness over the city. The feeling was universal that a great and good man had fallen in Israel, and fallen in the midst of his days. Though the grave has closed over him, and even the very sanctuary in which he ministered has disappeared, and men lay up the treasures of earth on the very spot where this faithful minister of the Gospel urged them to lay up the treasures of Heaven, it is grateful to reflect that his powerful ministrations,—his works of faith, and labours of love, are still silently, but certainly, accomplishing their end, in advancing the great interests of the Kingdom of Christ.

Very sincerely yours,

J. W. McLANE.

## ICHABOD SMITH SPENCER, D. D.\*

1826—1854.

ICHABOD SMITH SPENCER was a descendant, in the seventh generation, from Thomas Spencer, one of the first settlers of Hartford, Conn., who died in 1687. The son of this Thomas Spencer settled in Suffield, in the same State, where the family resided until about 1786, when Phineas Spencer, the father of the subject of this notice, removed to Rupert in the State of Vermont. Here he was born on the 23d of February, 1798,—the youngest but one of eleven children. He lost his father when he was seventeen, but his mother's death occurred only three years before his own. His father was a farmer in comfortable circumstances, able and willing, it would seem, to give this son, whose early intellectual developments were somewhat remarkable, a collegiate education; but, for some reason, he remained at home till after his father's death, enjoying only the advantages of a common school. His parents being neither of them professors of religion, though persons of exemplary moral habits, little attention was paid to his religious education, and his early years seem to have been an unbroken scene of thoughtlessness and gaiety.

\* Memoir by Rev. J. M. Sherwood.—MS. from Mrs. Spencer.

The death of his father, which occurred in 1815, marked a decisive epoch in the history of his life. The year after this event, and in consequence of it, he left home,—the first step, it would seem, towards that eminent position which he was destined ultimately to occupy. Providence directed him to the town of Granville, Washington County, N. Y., where, for about a year, he was engaged in manual labour. During his residence here, he became the hopeful subject of a revival of religion, and made a public profession of his faith by joining the Congregational Church of Middle Granville, then under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Nathaniel Hall. Being regarded as a young man of decided talent, and as giving good evidence of piety, it was strongly recommended to him to devote himself to the ministry. In pursuance with this advice, and in conformity with his own feelings and convictions, he soon after entered the Academy at Salem in the same county, where he remained until he was fitted for College. Here he profited much by the ministry and friendship of the venerable Dr. Proudfit, who was distinguished for the interest he took in young men, struggling with difficulties in the effort to obtain an education. He sustained himself, while at the Academy, partly by teaching. He also went through a course of medical reading with the student who occupied the same room with him at Salem; and this he was able to turn to good account, in after life, in many of his visits to the poor.

X He entered the Sophomore class of Union College in 1819, and graduated in 1822, at the age of twenty-four, with a high reputation for both talents and scholarship. At this period, he seems to have been somewhat undecided in regard to a profession. He thought seriously of the Law, and actually commenced a course of study in that direction; but, instead of continuing it, he accepted an invitation to take charge of the grammar school in Schenectady. Here he remained about three years, and acquired great distinction as a teacher. Having already given considerable attention to Medicine and Law, he engaged now in the study of Theology under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Andrew Yates, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Union College; and, at the same time, made himself quite familiar with several of the Indian dialects.

In the autumn of 1825, he removed to Canandaigua, in Western New York, having been chosen Principal of the Academy in that place. That institution, though well endowed, had greatly declined in prosperity; but, by his vigorous and well directed efforts, he quickly succeeded in imparting to it new life, and raising it to a commanding position among the primary educational institutions of the State. In connection with his laborious duties in the school, he continued his theological studies until he was qualified to preach the Gospel. He received licensure in November, 1826, from the Presbytery of Geneva. He continued his connection with the Academy nearly two years after this, preaching frequently on the Sabbath in the neighbouring pulpits, and giving all the time he could spare from his engagements in the school, to theological study.

In May, 1828, he was married, in the city of New York, to Hannah, youngest daughter of John Magoffin. Mrs. Spencer, with four children, survives her husband.

In the summer of this year, Mr. Spencer received and accepted a call from the Congregational Church in Northampton, Mass. He was ordained as Colleague Pastor with the Rev. Solomon Williams, on the 11th of



September following. Here he continued labouring with most untiring zeal and energy, and with remarkable success, three years and a half. During the years 1830 and 1831, a very extensive and powerful revival occurred in connection with his labours, which tasked all his energies so intensely and incessantly, and for so long a time, that he found, at the close of it, that his health was giving way, and that even the continuance of his life probably depended on his taking some less laborious charge. Accordingly, with great reluctance, and much to the regret of his people, he determined on a removal; and he soon accepted a call from a Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, N. Y. He was installed there on the 23d of March, 1832; and this was his last field of ministerial labour.

The church of which he now took charge was in its infancy; but, by his great wisdom, and energy, and almost unexampled industry, in connection with a rich blessing from on high, he succeeded in raising it into one of the most prosperous and efficient churches in the Presbyterian denomination.

In 1836, he accepted the Professorship Extraordinary of Biblical History in the Union Theological Seminary in the city of New York, and retained it for about four years. He was one of the Founders and original Directors of that institution; though, by reason of some considerations, partly of a personal, and partly of a public nature, he ultimately resigned the office both of Professor and of Director.

In the great controversy which divided the Presbyterian Church in 1837-38, he held somewhat of a neutral attitude, not fully sympathizing with either party. His preference, however, on the whole, was for the Old School, as was evinced by his always continuing in that connection.

In 1841, he was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Hamilton College.

Though Dr. Spencer suffered not a little during his ministry from physical derangement, and especially from a diseased state of the nervous system, his public labours were very little interrupted by sickness until the last year or two of his life. In the spring of 1852, his people, perceiving that his health was seriously impaired, proposed to him to intermit his labours for a season, and try the effect of a voyage to Europe. But, instead of carrying out their wish, he made a hasty trip to Savannah, and in a few weeks was again at his post, as laboriously engaged as ever. His last attack occurred early in January, 1854; and its severity obliged him at once to suspend all labour. In May he was so far recovered as to take a journey to the White Sulphur Springs of Virginia, accompanied by Mrs. Spencer, and his eldest son, who was also an invalid. After six weeks, he returned so much improved as to preach again to his people until the close of July. After that, he visited Sharon Springs, Saratoga, and other places, in quest of health; but his torturing malady yielded to nothing. He returned home about the middle of October, and it now became apparent that his case was beyond the reach of medical aid. He went to his chamber for the last time on the 28th of that month, and, after about four weeks of the most intense bodily anguish, passed away in perfect peace, and in the joyful hope of a blessed immortality. He died on the 23d of November, 1854. The Funeral services were attended at the Church on the Sabbath following, and a Sermon preached on the occasion by the Rev. Dr. Spring, of New York, which has been published.

The high estimate in which Dr. Spencer was held, was sufficiently evinced by the efforts that were made to secure his services in various important fields of ministerial labour. In 1830, he was called to the Presidency of the University of Alabama, and in 1832, to the Presidency of Hamilton College. About the time of his leaving Northampton, he received a call from Park Street Church, Boston, and overtures on the same subject were again made to him by the same Church in 1835. In 1833, he received a unanimous call to the Essex Street Church, Boston. Many formal calls were put into his hands, and many overtures made to him, from Churches in New York, Philadelphia, Newark, Buffalo, Cincinnati, and various other important places. In 1853, he was elected to the Professorship of Pastoral Theology in the East Windsor Theological Seminary. None of these calls tempted him away from his chosen field,—though they were unequivocal evidences of his distinguished worth and ability.

The following is a list of Dr. Spencer's publications:—A Discourse occasioned by the Great Fire in New York, 1835. A Discourse on the Claims of Seamen, 1836. A Sermon preached the Sabbath after the death of General Harrison, 1841. A Sermon on the day of the National Fast, observed on account of the death of the President of the United States, 1841. A Sermon in the National Preacher on Living and Walking in the Spirit, 1841. A Sermon on the comparative claims of Home and Foreign Missions, 1843. A Sermon in the National Preacher, entitled "Solomon's experience and observation—Hatred of Life," 1849. A Sermon on the Necessity of the Sufferings of Christ. A Sermon on the Fugitive Slave Law, 1850. A Pastor's Sketches, or Conversations with Anxious Inquirers respecting the Way of Salvation, 1850. A Pastor's Sketches, Second Series, 1853. [These Sketches have been republished in England, and have also been translated into the French language, and published in France.]

Since the death of Dr. Spencer, two volumes of his Sermons have been published, in connection with a Memoir of his life by the Rev. J. M. Sherwood.

FROM THE REV. GARDINER SPRING, D. D.

BRICK CHURCH CHAPEL, New York, }  
January 9, 1855.

My dear Brother: It is a pleasant yet a painful task, to comply with your request in regard to our deceased brother, Spencer. I have so many years enjoyed the privilege of such fraternal intercourse with him, that to speak of him gratifies me, while, at the same time, it opens the wound inflicted by his departure, afresh. The following imperfect sketch is the best I can now furnish you.

It is characteristic of the best ministers that they are best at home, and most distinguished in their own pulpits. There was no "flourish of trumpets" with Dr. Spencer, when he went abroad. He was not demonstrative in his nature, nor eager for the praise of men. He was emulous, but it was mainly to magnify the truths of God, and do good to the souls of men. No man was less desirous than he to "create a sensation" and set the world aghast by his preaching. Yet was he exclusively devoted to his work. His heart, his thoughts, his studies and attainments, his time, his interests, his influence and his life, were given to the ministry. Few ministers of the Everlasting Gospel, if any, are more industrious; and few have less occasion to lament misspent and wasted hours. The result was that he became one of the best and most effective preachers of the



age. Few habitually spake like him in discourses of such instructiveness, such attractive persuasion, such withering rebuke of wickedness, or such happy effects upon the minds of men. He spake "the things which became sound doctrine," and declared "the whole counsel of God." He was cautious and wise, but he was urgent and in earnest. He was often tender to weeping, yet was he a most fearless preacher. There was a large commingling of the "Son of Consolation" with the "Son of Thunder" in his character. I have heard him say that he did not know what it was to be ensnared or embarrassed in preaching God's truth, and that the thought of being afraid to utter it, because it was unpopular, never once entered his mind. There was something of nature in this, and more of grace; he was fearless of men, because he feared God. There was great variety in his preaching; he was not confined to a few thread-bare topics; his mind and heart took a wide range, and brought out of his treasure "things both new and old." Nor was he given to crude and imperfect preparations for the pulpit: a volume of sermons might be selected from his manuscripts, which would be a beautiful model for the youthful ministry, and a great comfort to the Church of God. His Sabbath Evening Lectures on the Shorter Catechism, as well as portions of his Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans, will not easily be forgotten by those who heard them.

In his style of writing, and in his style and manner of preaching, he was manly, strong, and energetic, rather than rhetorical. His thoughts were weighty; his imagination rich; but they were sweet thoughts and hallowed imaginations. He had no verbiage. I know no man whose piety and taste more instinctively revolted from the ostentation of words: his words were simple and "fitly spoken," and his style remarkably terse and sententious. There was now and then an iron nerve about his discourses and manner, and a flash of thought, that were startling, and that broke upon his hearers like a voice of thunder. Yet, with all this startling boldness, there was sweetness, humility, and meekness, and those deep and realizing views of Divine truth which indicated that he was taught of God. It was not difficult to perceive that he was no stranger to the duties of the closet. In his own pulpit, his prayers were distinguished, not only for their devotional spirit, but for their appropriateness and variety. Those who have heard him most and longest, and most attentively, have remarked that they never knew any thing like repetition in his prayers, and never enjoyed such variety of sacred thought and emotion as they enjoyed from his devotional exercises.

He excelled also as a preacher. His parochial duties were his labour and delight. There was great faithfulness, great painstaking, and even great *tact* in his pastoral services. The life of a pastor consists, in no small degree, in the study of personal character, and in the study and exhibition of those Divine truths that are adapted to the character and experience of those committed to his charge. Dr. Spencer's "Pastoral Sketches,"—a work of great interest in itself, and great value to ministers, and to all inquiring minds, illustrates his great excellence in this department of ministerial labour. His acquaintance with the spiritual history of his people gave him prodigious advantage over their minds in his discourses from the pulpit. His portraits of character were to the life; and though they were delicately drawn, and without personal allusion, there was no escape from the grasp of truth, when he put the screws upon the conscience, and made the law and the Gospel alike utter the words of Nathan to David,—*"Thou art the man."* And the beauty of the process was, that he did it with a tenderness and sympathy that so linked the speaker with the hearers, that the stout-hearted could not complain, and the broken-hearted were made whole. He had no theory of "revivals," yet was he often in the midst of them. God's truth, God's Spirit, and the prayers of his people, were the only agencies he relied on, and he found them abundantly adequate to their end. God gave

him souls for his hire. This is the reward he sought after, and he enjoys it now.

I need not speak of his *life*. He is the only man who ever doubted that he was a man of genuine piety. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," these things belonged to Dr. Spencer. Not a blot rests upon his fair name. The perplexed will miss his counsels, the afflicted will miss his sympathies, and the poor of Brooklyn will miss his laborious charities.

Dr. Spencer was for years a great sufferer, and his sufferings sometimes oppressed his heart, because they unfitted him for active labour; yet I have seen him more depressed when the sunlight of prosperity shone upon him, than in the dark night of his affliction. His graces grew under the sharpest trials; and amid all the outward darkness with which he was so long enveloped, his path shone brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

During the last three or four weeks of his life, so severe were his sufferings, that he was not inclined to much conversation. But, on the Monday preceding his death, being comparatively free from pain, and perceiving that his time was short, he called his family about his bed, and requested them to be so arranged that he could see them all, and separately address each one of them. He told them that he expected to die, and expected to go to Heaven, and expressed the hope that he should meet them all there. In his own simple manner, and with all the tenderness of a dying man, he opened to them the way of life by Jesus Christ, spoke to them of his own confidence in the Saviour, and urged them to "cling to Christ and the Bible" as their only hope.

It was just after this affecting scene that I knocked at his door. And never was I more kindly directed than in making this fraternal visit. I had some fears from what I knew of his self-scrutinizing spirit, that I might find him in a depressed state of mind. But as he drew near the close of his struggles, God was kind, and gave him sweet indications of his paternal love. There he tossed, day after day, and night after night, upon that couch of racking pain, with a mind as clear as Newton's, and a heart as peaceful as a child in its mother's bosom. The great peculiarity of his Christian character was his shrinking humility, and self-diffidence. More than once in the days of his unbroken vigour, I have heard him say,—“I have mistaken my calling; I never was fit for a minister of the Gospel.” No one else thought so; yet he retained this self-diffidence to the last. I said to him,—“Brother Spencer, I am afraid you are about to leave us.” He replied,—“I think so.” I took his hand and he said,—“You see I am strong; I may rally, but it is more than probable that I shall leave you by to-morrow morning.” “Is it *peace* with you, brother?” His body was in agony; he tossed his head on the pillow and replied,—“*It is all peace.*” He paused, and fixing his piercing eye upon me, said,—“I am afraid it is too much peace. I cannot discover in myself those evidences of personal godliness which justify me in enjoying such abundant peace.” I could not repress a smile at these sweet words, and then reminded him of those words of the Lord Jesus, when he said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly.*” He simply replied,—“Pray with me;” and then called his family around his bed, where we knelt and prayed together for the last time. His sufferings continued without any abatement, with the exception of a few tranquil hours which he employed in giving to those around him his last counsels and charge, commending them to God, and testifying his own precious hopes and the prospects that cheered him, as he bade them farewell. He subsequently conversed but little. His manly frame was exhausted. Three days after this, the strong man bowed himself to the impotence and dust of death. An inscru-



table Providence made him a partaker in his Master's sufferings; abundant grace made him partaker in his glory.

With affectionate regards and earnest desires that the persevering labours of your pen may remind future generations of the worth and excellence of many devoted servants of God,

I am, my dear Sir,

Your friend and brother,

GÄRDINER SPRING.

FROM THE REV. MELANCTHON W. JACOBUS, D. D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

ALLEGHANY, February, 28, 1853.

My dear Sir: During a pastorate of twelve years in Brooklyn, Dr. Spencer was my near neighbour and co-presbyter. They were the years of his prime and power, when his highly favoured church and that intelligent community enjoyed his best labours. He was the last of our cotemporaries called to yield his pulpit at the pressure of disease, two only excepted—Dr. Cutler, of St. Ann's, and the Rev. Jonathan Greenleaf, of East Brooklyn. The Lord preserve them both many years!

Dr. Spencer was of the middle stature; square, rather than corpulent; and of a commanding presence from his massiveness of frame.

A keen look and prompt movement, with a certain liveliness of address, gave him a business air, not undignified, though at times somewhat abrupt. With great energy and individuality, united to a characteristic fearlessness of temper and power of will, he may have seemed often to wear a bluntness of manner. But they who knew him at the fireside and in the lecture-room, showed by their warm admiration how winning he could be in his intercourse, and how fondly he could exercise the finest feelings of the Christian heart.

In the pulpit, with a broad, bold face, short, gray whiskers, and a peculiar glare in his eye, he had an aspect of gravity, that bordered perhaps upon severity. A peculiar arrangement of his hair, exposing an open, majestic forehead, aided this characteristic expression; and this, with an accent that was often taken for a foreign one, might remind you of one of the Scotch Reformers, as capable of great blandness, yet able to gather into a perfect storm-cloud of rebuke.

In conversation he was rather reserved than talkative, but of ready wit, which he wielded at times with excellent effect. In the study of our Episcopal brother, Dr. Cutler, his attention was directed to a fine picture of a shipwreck that adorned the wall. Dr. C. pointed him to the crew who were making off in the small boat, and especially to a young Lieutenant, who, in springing for it, had fallen short and was drowning. "That countenance," said Dr. C., "has the very expression of prayer." The word "prayer," struck Dr. Spencer, and raising himself in his chair, with his eye intently fixed upon the young man, he said to Dr. C.,—"But where's the Book?" The rejoinder of course was not lacking.

In his positive style, he could deal out the most crushing denunciation, or the keenest sarcasm, whether in public or in private. Yet no one could do this with greater impunity. It was conceded as his privilege to express himself boldly—sometimes sharply. But if he offended ever by this means, he still drew his people and his brethren to him by other ties too strong to be broken. He was a ruler as well as a teacher.

A prominent member of his church, having the same cast of character as himself, differed from him, and removed to another connection. A few years afterwards, in conversation with a brother minister, when the name of Dr. Spencer was mentioned, he said,—"I don't like the Doctor—he is rough and tyrannical;

but," he added, "I will say this for him,—he taught me all that ever I knew." Not long after this, the conversation was related to him. It amused him greatly. He spoke very kindly of his former parishioner, remarking only,—“I know why he didn't like me. I wouldn't let him have his way.”

He possessed, as is well known, an intellect of very uncommon vigour. Able to grapple with complicated questions, theoretical and practical, he excelled in power of analysis and argumentation. In ecclesiastical bodies, he spoke seldom, but to the point—was brief rather than long—rather last than first, coming in usually with an opinion or argument that would serve as a solution of the matter.

His sermons were uniformly written out in full; yet with ready command of the manuscript, few extemporaneous speakers were more able to impress an audience. His style was logical and forcible, and his matter commonly compact. His discourse was characterized by a simple and clear statement, rejecting mere rhetorical fineries, and seldom using a rare word. He eschewed alike a *dilettante* performance, and a newspaper harangue. He came to his people with his own exposition of great Gospel subjects, yet occasionally with a profound discussion of some mooted topic of the day. In certain published efforts of this kind, he won the most flattering testimonies of leading statesmen, as having a mind that would have adorned any public station. But no station was higher than his own. He had his own views, and expressed them often, when he differed from some of his leading members, gaining a character for plain spoken deliverances, whether men would hear or forbear. He was at home in preaching Christ Jesus,—with amplitude of thought, and originality of treatment, and copious citation of Scripture, with expression rather strong than elegant, yet not without fine flashes of fancy and striking illustrations. His delivery was earnest and tender, with impassioned bursts of eloquence, and pungent in enforcement of his well discriminated points. Frequently as he used to appear in the lecture-room, many of his best hearers preferred him there.

His sermons and lectures were rather experimental than theological in their general cast. He had great power in dealing with the heart,—exposing subtle sophisms and lurking objections; analyzing the religious characters of his hearers, and storming their strongholds. He would often *pick out* a case in his audience, like a practised marksman; and we may safely say that few of his congregation found themselves unreached. His style was characterized by great *directness*. These public ministrations he would follow up with earnest private appeals, that were often richly blessed to the salvation of old and young. His conferences were faithful pungent probings of the various phases of unbelief, or misbelief, or disbelief, that came under his charge, and few found their difficulties unanswered, if they opened their case honestly and fully to his notice.

He paid great attention to his Sabbath School, commonly dropping in at least for a word or a look before the service of the Church; and the effect was felt in a most flourishing condition of this department, including often two or three separate schools.

It can readily be inferred that it was as a PASTOR that Dr. Spencer displayed his most eminent gifts. The two rare volumes of “Pastor's Sketches” which he has left, were the natural fruit of his labours. None but one so rarely adapted to that office, could have left such a thesaurus of experience. They are his best autobiography. They sketch the Pastor fully as much as the Parishioner. His distinguished traits as a shrewd casuist, a subtle logician, a tender counsellor, a patient, persevering winner of souls, appeared to full advantage in his daily ministrations. All his energies were devoted to the pastoral work. He loved it. He declined important calls to other posts, because his heart was in this. He was a Shepherd, and if not always and to all the same *gentle Shepherd*,





tions, and many New England men, though he differed from and deprecated certain religious and political opinions which he understood to prevail there I told him, as frankly, that I agreed in many things with those from whom he differed, but hoped to live and work beside him, in general sympathy, and an efficient co-operation in all good efforts. I had thenceforth frequent opportunities to hear him preach, and often met him in social and clerical circles, though my relations with him never became intimate.

He was a man of extreme independence of character, of a naturally reserved and reticent temper I think, and of very strong and positive convictions. With these, too, he combined unusually sensitive and ardent feelings; and I imagine that it had been the habit of his life, from a very early period, to devote himself assiduously, almost exclusively, to what he regarded as his special work, to be wrought in his particular place, and in his own methods, without much attention to those around him. These qualities, and this habit, of course kept him aloof to a considerable extent from those who were not ecclesiastically connected with him, and who were not in many things of his way of thinking. And while I was often brought in contact with him, I do not feel that I ever came fully into his special sphere of feeling and thought. My observations upon him were those rather of a friendly spectator than of a sympathizing confidant; and as such you must receive them.

In the family circle, his own or that of any friend, or in company with those whom he admitted to frequent and familiar intercourse, the same characteristics to which I have referred made Dr. Spencer delightful and attractive beyond most men; and thus made him a model of energy, efficiency, and untiring assiduity, as the Pastor of his own parish, and as a visiter to those of the sick and poor whom he regarded as under his especial charge. No minister in the city, at that time or since, no minister whom I have ever known in any place, had a stronger hold than he had on the affections of his own people. Their confidence in him was almost literally unlimited. No man was ever more beloved and revered among the poor whom he assisted. And certainly no man, in his own household, was ever honoured and loved beyond him, as the memory of no one is now more tenderly and religiously cherished.

On one of the last occasions on which I met him, at the house of a common friend, a parishioner of his, I was greatly impressed with his kind and affectionate attentiveness to the children of the family. The eldest daughter of our friend, a lively and inquisitive little girl of then perhaps nine years old, seemed to be his particular favourite. She was almost instantly installed upon his knee, and a perfect battery of questions was established on either side. Interrogatories and answers flew back and forth, almost without cessation or intermission, till the little lady was dismissed at bedtime; and the beautiful tenderness and playfulness of his manner to this lamb of his flock, as contrasted with the usual seriousness and reserve of his demeanour, marked a feature in his character which I shall never cease to remember, or, I trust, to be instructed by. The incident followed soon after the only direct collision in controversy which I ever had with Dr. Spencer, in which sharper things had been said upon both sides than the later judgment of either party would probably have justified; and it was therefore peculiarly pleasant and memorable to me. The light of this genial and delicate tenderness, irradiated and placed in new aspects the character of which the public saw only the colder and less gracious side.

The same qualities of character which led Dr. Spencer to interest himself so peculiarly and familiarly in the children of his people, led him also to meet with a most attractive readiness and warmth those who came to converse with him on the subject of personal religion. He studied their several cases with the utmost earnestness, and laboured intently to assist and guide them. All the forms of reserve which he gathered around him, in general society, as if to



shield himself from the scrutiny of the public, all the aspect of abruptness and occasional harshness with which he met those who, as he thought, were intruding on his rights or his privilege, were instantly and spontaneously laid aside with those who came to him in any spiritual perplexity or distress; and with a rare assiduity and fidelity, as well as with a very unusual power of conversational argument and appeal, he applied himself to the removal of every honest difficulty from their minds, to the breaking down of every fabricated excuse, and the carrying of their hearts to the Person and the Cross of the Saviour of the world. Of course this was a relation in which I never personally met him. But his published writings bear witness to his extraordinary skill and success in this species of labour,—a success owing partly, of course, to his mental constitution, but essentially, and perhaps more largely, to the real and hearty interest which he took in every honest and earnest inquirer. And some of those who have had experience of it have assured me that the delicate, sinuous, yet vigorous, masterly and inevitable manner in which he developed their hidden experience, met their resistances, overcame their objections, anticipated their excuses, and rained the warnings, the promises, and all the urgencies of the Gospel upon them, until they yielded and gave themselves to Christ, shall never be effaced from their recollection, and cannot be surpassed in the impressions which they have left of fidelity and power.

The conversation of Dr. Spencer on general subjects, unless when his mind was otherwise pre-occupied, was always animated, energetic and instructive; and now and then his sentences flashed with a rapid and trenchant wit of which I never saw any trace in his public discoursing. His wit more frequently took the form of irony or satire, than of any fanciful or humorous turns of speech; and once or twice I remember to have heard from him a sudden and original reduction to absurdity of some argument against which he was reasoning or inveighing, which seemed to indicate that that was among the more frequent and familiar of his mental processes. As a faithful narrator of the impressions which he made on me, I am bound to add that he seemed to me to see rather the weak points than the strong points, the points of marked irregularity and defect rather than those of proportion and beauty, in the character of the men with whom he was contemporaneous, and especially of those with whom he had differed. I have heard him speak of distinguished divines in the Presbyterian Church, and in his own branch of it, with a pungent freedom of characterization, which in a man of another constitution would have argued an unfriendly or hostile temper towards them, but which in him I think showed only this peculiarity of mind, unaccompanied by any real acerbity of spirit. He was sensitive, however, and was subject to great occasional depression of spirits. And when his feelings had been wounded, he undoubtedly felt the smart of it long; so that something of this may occasionally have mingled in his conversation at such times.

The sermons of Dr. Spencer undoubtedly owed very much of their effectiveness to the strong personal qualities of the man, and especially to his great voluntary force. He seemed sometimes to carry his hearers by the sheer energy of volition to the conclusions which he announced. Whether their minds had fully grasped his argument or not, he so far governed them by the pressure of his will, for the time at least, that few, I presume, ever went from the house in which he had preached without having been impressed and moved. There were times, too, in his preaching, when this remarkable and mastering power, co-operating happily with a vivid development of logic and thought, and a cogent and potent strain of appeal, produced the effect of noble eloquence. It seemed to me more than once, when I heard him, that if he could have been perfectly liberated at certain points from the last imperceptible restraints of that reserve which still clung to him like a nature, and could have poured his whole soul into his speech

with a perfect *abandon* to the impulse of his theme, then, with this great power of will, and with his very eminent logical faculty, he would have surpassed almost any preacher of the day. There may have been some passages in his discourses where this was realized, but I never heard them. The final finish of an utter unreserve, which would have put the crown of light on his so muscular and urgent speech, seemed to me to be wanting in him.

Aside from these qualities of which I have spoken, I was always struck in his sermons, more than with any thing else, with occasional passages of a certain weird and mysterious loftiness of suggestion, which seemed to show that the imaginative element was naturally strong in him, and that if it had been cherished, it would have been more prominent than any other. I frequently heard arguments from him with which I could not altogether agree, and saw positions taken by him which failed to command the deference of my judgment; but I was always impressed with this imaginative power in him; the more, perhaps, because it was not generally recognised. I remember a sermon of his on the Mystery of Redemption,—I am not sure whether it is contained in the volumes of his published Sermons or not,—which he preached in my own pulpit, and which I was providentially permitted to hear, in which the vastness and darkness of the experience of Death, as confessed by all men, was presented as a kind of counterpoise to the asserted mysteriousness of the system of Redemption; and in which his words, his sentences, his whole manner and tone, seemed suffused with an almost palpable influence from the august mystery of which he was discoursing. The whole paragraph, as uttered by him, was easy to be understood, was entirely perspicuous and natural in construction and imagery; and yet it seemed strangely shrouded and loaded with an atmosphere of mystery,—an atmosphere which it gradually diffused through the house. The words shed dark suggestions on the hearers. The heart grew chill and palpitated under them, till I am sure that all who heard it must have felt that the dark and supernal glory of Death had been meditated by the speaker until, as a Presence, it had dominated his thoughts and toned his words. The impression grew constantly weightier to the end, as the sentences successively shuddered forth in the deepest bass of his peculiar and arresting voice. In this respect, the sermon, or at least that part of it, still remains in my thoughts as one of the most remarkable it has been my fortune to hear.

In all our local Societies, for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ within the bounds of the city,—especially in the City Bible Society, of which he was in fact the father,—Dr. Spencer took a lively and efficient interest. The same tendencies of mind which led him to concentrate his sympathies and his energies very much on his own parish, led him also to appreciate highly such Societies, and to labour diligently to advance and invigorate them. Whoever else might be discouraged or backward in the effort to sustain and extend their usefulness, he never was. He was an example of regularity and punctuality in his attendance upon their quarterly and annual business meetings; and often I have seen his powerful influence interposed at some crisis, encouraging the irresolute, resisting those who would counsel any abatement of their efficiency, and urging instead to loftier plans and wider effort. In this respect the city suffered an important loss when he was removed from it; and it will owe him a debt of remembrance and gratitude as long as its history as a city continues.

The last illness of Dr. Spencer was protracted and painful, far beyond the ordinary experience of men, and it brought into bright and impressive exhibition those parts of his character which were really admirable and unusual. With his robust and massive frame, and his long habit of perfect health,—enabling him to perform without difficulty or fatigue such labours as few are prepared to undertake,—any sickness must of course have been a burden to him,—the severer and more trying, because it was rare. But in his case the sickness itself was of



a nature to task his utmost power of endurance. An internal malignant disease consumed some organs whose processes are necessary to the maintenance of life; and it must have been like carrying, day after day, a literal fire among his members, to sustain the pain which this inflicted. Yet when I met him upon the street, a few weeks only before his death, although his usually prompt and firm step was wavering and weak, and his cheek was blanched with the fearful experience through which he was passing, and though his tone was tremulous and despondent as he spoke of the prospect of resuming his labours, there was no one syllable of repining or impatience in all that he said, and he even referred to the pain he had suffered in a way to lead me to think of it as a matter not extreme or unusual. When afterward, learning that he was confined to his bed again, and that it was doubtful if he would ever rise from it, I called to inquire for him, he was unable to see me, and the groans wrung from him by the excess of his pain were audible on the door-step. Yet he met the whole, even to the last, with a settled and resolute Christian patience, a supreme resignation to the will of God, which was only appropriately as well as affectionately recognised by Dr. Spring in his Funeral Sermon, and which no man, although of the hardest nature, could possibly have exhibited without the same Christian experience, without the same sustaining trust. The thickest cloud of his own distress, the heavy darkness which gathered on him through the sudden failure of the reason of one who was very dear to him, was still parted and gilded, if it was not dispersed, by the assurance he felt of God's goodness and wisdom, and of his acceptance of himself through Christ. And so, without repining or murmuring, he struggled bravely through, and passed, I cannot doubt, from his furnace on the earth to his mansion in the skies!

I am sensible, my dear Sir, as I look on what I have written, that there is little in it of much importance, or, I fear, of much fitness to your purpose. Dr. Spencer was pre-eminently a man who must be lived with, or very frequently and familiarly met, in order to be truly and thoroughly known. His outward and public manner he seemed to wear oftentimes like a corslet; and the throbbings of his heart were only to be felt by those who leaned on his heart at home, or whom he clasped in the warm embrace of an intimate friendship. Such a relation to him, as I said at the outset, I never sustained. Many things prevented it; our difference of age, of constitution, of opinion, and of connection; especially, latterly, our total disagreement on themes which to both of us seemed important. I have had but these general impressions, therefore, derived from occasional and fragmentary observation, to communicate to you. But I am happy in having the opportunity to do this; both because I represent, probably, in what I have said, the prevalent or at least one prominent impression which the public mind took from him, and because I gladly pay my tribute to one whose laborious and indefatigable life, whose remarkable powers, earnest fidelity to what he deemed duty, great success in 'winning souls,' exemplary and intelligent charity to the poor, and saintly and heroic death, will cause his name to be held, even amid this changing city, in long, honoured and affectionate remembrance.

With great regard, I am ever yours,

R. S. STORRS, JR.

A PASTOR'S SKETCHES. By ICHABOD S. SPENCER, D.D.  
Second series. New-York: M. W. Dodd.

We simply announced this work at the date of its appearance, knowing that the high character of the former volume would create a demand for this. Having read the book with care, and feeling ourselves much profited by its suggestive narratives, we would earnestly recommend it to all, and especially to our ministerial brethren who may not yet have procured it. There is perhaps no other branch of pastoral duty more delicate and difficult, none requiring a more intimate knowledge of the heart and more holy boldness in the faith, than the duty of directing inquiring minds to Christ. Failure here is more frequent than in the pulpit; and all the helps and suggestions which a Christian pastor can receive to aid him in the right performance of this duty ought to be gratefully and eagerly improved. It is good to know the methods which others pursue in "driving the nail to a sure place." Dr. Spencer's large and varied experience, together with his scriptural knowledge, have enabled him to furnish much more than a series of exciting sketches. His volumes are practical illustrations of great truths, and furnish no feeble testimony in favor of direct, probing, thorough examination of the heart in the light of Sacred Scripture. We do not much like his style; it seems percussive, and smacks occasionally of semi-rudeness. But the heart of the writer is warm with affectionate zeal, and his pages will therefore attract and benefit thousands.

*From W. H. P. Dailey '84.*

*2/25/31.*

1836

ICHABOD SMITH SPENCER

1840

Born, Rupert, Vt., Feb. 23, 1798; Union College, 1822; principal (Grammar School), Schenectady, N. Y., 1822-25; studied theology with Prof. Andrew Yates, D.D., of Union College; principal (Grammar School), Canandaigua, N. Y., 1825-27; licensed (Presbytery of Geneva), 1826; ordained (Congregational, Hampshire Association), Sep. 11, 1828; pastor, Northampton, Mass., 1827-32; pastor (Second Presbyterian, Brooklyn, N. Y., 1832-54; director, Union Theological Seminary, 1836-49; professor extraordinary (Biblical History), ditto, 1836-40; died, Brooklyn, N. Y., Nov. 23, 1854. S.T.D. Hamilton College, 1841. *From: Union Theol. Sem. Cat. 1836-1918.*

Rev. ICHABOD S. SPENCER, A.M., 1822, of Northampton, Mass., was a member of the  
Philomathean Society (Died: 1854)

Philomathean Catalogue 1830



*in the*  
LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PIERREPONT STREET CORNER CLINTON STREET  
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Memorandum concerning Rev. I.S. Spencer.

According to our records and other information on file at the library, the portrait of Rev. Ichabod S. Spencer was painted by Gray. It was presented to the Society in 1890 by James M. Spencer who was born in 1839, and was the son of the Rev. Ichabod S. Spencer.

Rev. Ichabod S. Spencer was the first pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, from 1832 until he died in 1854. The Second church was formed by members of the First Church who left in 1831 because of the division between the Old and the New Schools.

The Second Church is now located at Clinton and Remsen Streets and is called the Spencer Memorial Presbyterian Church.

1822 Ichabod S. Spencer

Moved from Massachusetts to the town of Madison in 1802. He began law practice in 1808 and attained unusual success. He was the first Postmaster of Canastota, in 1829.

Our County & Its People      p. 507  
(Madison County)  
Hohn E. Smith, Editor  
Boston History Co.  
1899



May 19 1855

of the Class that graduated at Union College, in the year 18 22

SIR,—

He also requests that all future changes affecting the answers which shall be given be made known to him from time to time:—especially the deaths of Graduates, and that the usual obituary notices or funeral sermons published on such occasions, be sent with the announcements, as it is his purpose to publish these deaths hereafter once a year.

UNION COLLEGE,  
SCHENECTADY, N. Y.

N.B. 1. Let the answers to the following questions be as full and *authentic* as possible; but when doubtful let them be marked thus (?).  
2. When the person is deceased let some near relative or friend fill out the blanks to the best of his knowledge, if he have but *one fact*, let that be sent.  
3. Let as much time be taken as may be found necessary for this purpose, and no more.  
4. In case this sheet be not sufficient to contain all the facts to be sent, add another of the *same size*, if possible, leaving an inner margin of not less than one inch for binding.  
5. In cases where no answers to this circular shall be returned, the editor will be obliged to publish such names without any biographical notices, or to rely upon information gathered from other sources, and, therefore, not always authentic.



# INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE FOREGOING SKETCHES.

## I. Name.

[Let this be written plainly and the *middle* names in full.]

*Isabod Smith Spencer.*

## II. Names of both Parents; thus:—

[John and Elizabeth (Smith) Johnson.]

*Phineas and Miss (Sheldon) Spencer.*

## III. Birth Place.

*Reput. Bennington Co. N.Y.* Birth Day and Year. *February 23<sup>d</sup> 1798.*

## IV. Various residences and dates; thus:—

[Pittsfield, Mass., 1814-24; Albany, N. Y., 1824-30; New-York City, 1830-54.]

*Salem, N. Y. 1817-19; Schenectady, N. Y. 1822-23; Canandaigua, N. Y. 1825-27; Northampton, Mass. 1828-32; Brooklyn, N. Y. 1832-54.*

## V. At what Academy or Academies prepared for College, with Principals and dates; thus:—

[Albany Academy, Benjamin Allen, L. L. D., 1815-17.]

*Salem Academy. 1817-19.*

## VI. At what College he graduated, and when.

*Union College. 1822.*

## VII. The occupation he followed after leaving college before studying his profession; thus:—

[Teaching, Washington, D. C., 1847-48, or Merchant's Clerk, New-York City, 1849-51.]

*Principal of Grammar-School, Schenectady, N. Y. 1822-23.  
Principal of Academy, Canandaigua, N. Y. 1823-27.*

## VIII. The profession he studied; where; with whom; when; thus:—

[Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, 1822-5 or Law in Albany, N. Y., with Hon. Harmanus Bleecker, 1840-2.]

*Theology with Rev. Dr. Yates, Schenectady, N. Y. 1823-25.*

## IX. Where he has practised his profession, with dates; and in case he be a clergyman, mention the denomination to which he belongs; thus:—

[Epis., Somerville, N. J., 1827-30; Pres., Albany, N. Y., 1830-5; New-York City, 1835-54.]

*Cong. Northampton, Mass. 1828-32. Pres. Brooklyn, N. Y. 1832-54.*

## X. The other occupations he has followed; when and where; thus:—

[Merchant, Rochester, N. Y., 1829-35; or Farmer, Genesee, N. Y., 1835-54; or Manufacturer, Schoharie, N. Y., 1841-48; or Professor, teacher, banker, editor, &c.]



XI. The important offices he has held, with dates; thus:—

[Surrogate of Jefferson Co., N. Y., 1839-41 and 1845-7; Member of Congress, 21st district, N. Y., 1841-43; Member of Assembly, of N. Y., 1821-4, &c., &c.]

XII. The Literary or Scientific Works he has written or edited.

[Copies are solicited for the "Graduates Alcove" in College Library.]

*A Pastor's Sketches. 2 vols. Sermons. 2 vols. Several single sermons.*

XIII. The names of his relatives who graduated at Union College.

XIV. The literary, professional, or honorary titles he received; from whence, with dates; thus:—

[M. D., from Albany Medical College 1845; or LL. D., Amherst College, 1850, &c.]

*D. D. from Hamilton College. 1841.*

XV. Is there an engraved portrait of him?

[One or two copies, together with his autograph, are solicited for College Library.]

*There is an engraved portrait.*

XVI. The date, circumstances, and place of his death.

[Send any printed notice, biographical sketch, funeral sermon, &c. In many instances more space will be required to answer this and the three following questions, in which case add an additional sheet.]

*Nov. 23<sup>d</sup> 1854. Brooklyn N.Y.*

XVII. General information respecting character, services, success, interesting passages and events in his life, &c.

XVIII. Some account of his pedigree and family ; its origin seat in this or the old country, &c., &c.

XIX. List of such graduates as may not be *widely* known ; their residences, professions, dates of deaths, &c. ; the name and residence, also, of some near friend of the deceased, that further information may be sought for ; thus :—

[John Orton Smith, Banker, Chicopee, Mass., died 1848. His brother, Joseph H. Smith, resides in Springfield, Mass.]





J. H. ARMER

PHONE: 947-2407 • 60 WEST MAIN STREET • SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 85251

*File folder*

November 2, 1966

Union Alumni Office  
Wells House  
Union College  
Schenectady, New York

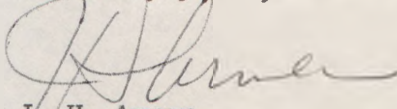
Dear sirs:

Mr. Harold A. Larrabee has referred me to you in regards to information I'm looking for on Ichabod Spencer. He tells me that you have a folder with data concerning Mr. Spencer.

I would like to know his birth date and place, death date and place, military service, and family. Perhaps you could direct me to reference books, magazines and the like that may have something about him. Also I am wondering if there are any known paintings, miniatures or silhouettes of him that may have been photographed or reproduced that I could see. Also did Ichabod Spencer have any association with and in Canastota, New York?

I hope that you will be able to help me with this information and I certainly will appreciate any answers you can give me.

Sincerely yours,

  
J. H. Armer

JHA/ib

November 8, 1966

Mr. J. H. Armer  
60 West Main Street  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

Dear Mr. Armer:

Dr. Larrabee had written of your interest in Ichabod Spencer who received the bachelor of arts degree at Union College in 1822. We are pleased that we can send you information on this alumnus. In 1841 Hamilton College conferred upon him the degree of doctor of divinity.

A record sheet dated May 19, 1855 gives the following biographical facts. His full name was Ichabod Smith Spencer, son of Phineas and Olive Sheldon Spencer, born February 23, 1798 at Rupert, Bennington County, Vermont. He prepared for college at Salem (New York) Academy and following graduation from Union studied theology with Dr. Yates at Schenectady. During this same period he was principal of the grammar school in Schenectady. From 1825-27 he was principal of the academy at Canandaigua, New York. He served the Congregational church in Northampton, Massachusetts (where he was ordained and installed) from 1828 to 1832 and Second Presbyterian Church at Brooklyn from 1832 until 1854. The Second Church is now located at Clinton and Remsen Streets and is called the Spencer Memorial Presbyterian Church (source of information is the Long Island Historical Society).

His death came at Brooklyn on November 23, 1854. From the spring of 1852 he suffered from seriously impaired health. In 1830 he was called to the Presidency of the University of Alabama and in 1832 to the Presidency of Hamilton College. He did not accept either of these. In 1836 he accepted the Professorship Extraordinary of Biblical History in the Union Theological Seminary and retained it for about four years. He is considered one of the founders of this Seminary.

The only reference in our file to Canastota appears to be an error since the dates are in conflict with Rev. Spencer's known career. The reference is taken from page 507 of Our County and Its People (Madison County) John E. Smith editor, Boston



November 8, 1966

History Co. 1899 and reads: "Moved from Massachusetts to the town of Madison in 1802. He began law practice in 1808 and attained unusual success. He was the first Postmaster of Canastota, in 1829."

In May 1828 he married in the City of New York, Hannah, the youngest daughter of John Magoffin. At the time of Ichabod Spencer's death she survived with four children. Unfortunately our record sheet of 1855 did not ask for marriage nor children, therefore none of this is given. We know of a daughter Katherine Spencer Leavitt since she "made several gifts to the College in memory of her father, Ichabod Spencer, among which are the sums of \$50,000 to be devoted to the maintenance of a Chair of Philosophy; of \$25,000 to be devoted to the maintenance of the Ichabod Spencer Lectures in Psychology; and \$3,780 as the Ichabod Spencer Fund for Needy Students. In her will Mrs. Leavitt bequeathed \$68,202.80 to the College as residuary legatee." The Katherine Spencer Leavitt Scholarship is listed in the current catalogue.

A portrait was presented to the College in 1914 and currently hangs in the college dining hall called Hale House. We do not have prints available at this time. A portrait painted by Gray was presented to the Long Island Historical Society, Pierrepont Street corner Clinton Street in Brooklyn, New York in 1890 by James M. Spencer who was born in 1839 and was the son of the Rev. Ichabod S. Spencer. The Historical Society so advised us and sent a print which was made by Ernest Tanare, General photographer at 4 Court Square in Brooklyn. That correspondence is undated.

Rev. Spencer's sermons have been published in a volume entitled "A Pastor's Sketches". This latter was published by M.W. Dodd in 1850 and reviewed at that time in Harper's Magazine, Vol. 11 p. 139. In 1855 M.W. Dodd (N.Y.) printed the Sermons of Rev. Ichabod S. Spencer, D.D. with a Sketch of his Life by Rev. J.M. Sherwood (Vol. 1 (in 2 volumes)). There is a full page portrait in this work.

We are curious about your interest in Reverend Ichabod Spencer. It is a pleasure to write about our alumni and we hope we have been of service to you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. C. L. Van Loan  
Administrative Assistant

MVL/cab

Ichabod Smith Spencer

1822

Ichabod Spencer was born at Rupert, Bennington County, Vt. on Feb 23, 1798. He moved to Salem Mass. in 1817 and attended the Academy there until 1819 when he entered Union College graduating in 1822, a member of Phi Beta Kappa. For the following three years he was the Principal of the Schenectady Grammar School, during which time he studied theology under Rev. Dr. Yates of Schenectady N.Y. From 1825 to 1827 he was Principal of the Academy at Canandaigua N.Y. when he gave up his position to practice the ministry, first with Dr. Williams of Northampton Mass. and later in Brooklyn N.Y. where he preached until his death in 1854. Dr. Spencer had been licensed by the Presbytery of Geneva N.Y. in 1826 and received his D.D. from Hamilton College in 1841. He declined the presidency of the University of Alabama in 1830 and that of Hamilton in 1832. He was one of the founders of the Union Theological Seminary and possessed also a considerable reputation as an author on theological subjects. He died at Brooklyn N.Y. on Nov. 23, 1854.

Katherine Spencer Leavitt has made several gifts to the College in memory of her father, Ichabod Spencer, among which are the sums of \$50,000 to be devoted to the maintenance of a Chair of Philosophy; of \$25,000 to be devoted to the maintenance of the Ichabod Spencer Lectures in Psychology; and \$3,780 as the Ichabod Spencer Fund for Needy Students. In her will Mrs. Leavitt bequeathed \$68,202.80 to the College as residuary legatee.

Total gifts of Katherine Spencer Leavitt.....\$146,982.80

Gift of the Friends and Alumni of Union to meet the gift of Mrs. Leavitt \$25,000.

MS. Lot 1822 Spencer - 1-0022



Ichabod Smith Spencer, clergyman and author, was born at Rupert, Bennington county, Vt., Feb. 23, 1798; descended from Thomas Spencer, who emigrated in 1633, removed with his brother William to Hartford in 1635, and died in 1687. Ichabod graduated from Union College in 1822; taught for three years at Schenectady, and three more at Canandaigua; was licensed by the presbytery of Geneva, N. Y., in 1826; was colleague of S. Williams, at Northampton, Mass., 1828-32, and for the rest of his life pastor of the Second Presbyterian church, Brooklyn, N. Y. He declined the presidency of the University of Alabama in 1830, and that of Hamilton college in 1832; was one of the founders of Union theological seminary, New York, and held the chair of Biblical history there 1836-40, in addition to his pastoral duties. He received the degree of D.D. from Hamilton college in 1840. The two series of his "Pastor's Sketches," (1850-53) gained great popularity at home and in England, and were translated into French. After his death two volumes of his sermons were published, with a memoir, by J. M. Sherwood (1855); "Sacramental Discourses" (1861), and "Evidences of Divine Revelation" (1865). He died in Brooklyn, Nov. 23, 1854.

The N. C. of A. B., Vol. V, Page 401.



Dr. Spencer kept no journal, made no record whatever of his personal history or feelings, and seldom alluded to himself in his intercourse with others. Our knowledge of him, beyond what we gained from years of friendly intercourse and personal observation, had to be gleaned from a great variety of sources--from hints scattered through his sermons and "Sketches"--from his extensive memoranda of his pastoral labors--from his correspondence with a few intimate friends--and from the treasured recollections of his family and people. Besides, he was a peculiar man. The world, his friends and people in general knew him not fully. Such was his modesty and shrinking diffidence and reserve that but little of his interior life and genial and noble character found free expression to the eye and ear of the world. He had to be judged of mainly by his works, his daily life and conversation. pp.9-10

We know but little, comparatively, of the childhood and youth of our friend; ----He was the seventh in descent from Thomas Spencer, one of the first settlers of Hartford, Connecticut, who died in 1687. The son of this Thomas Spencer settled in Suffield, in the same State, where the family resided until about 1786, when the father of Dr. Spencer removed to the town of Rupert, county of Bennington, in the State of Vermont. Here Ichabod Smith Spencer was born, on the 23d day of February, 1798, the youngest but one of eleven children. Four of his sisters and two of his brothers survive him. His father died while he was yet young, and his mother only a few years since. His father was an agriculturist in comfortable circumstances, able and desirous, it would seem, to give this son, whose earliest years were marked with decided promise, a collegiate education; but for some reason he remained home until after his father's death, receiving only such an education as the excellent common schools of New England afford, in addition to his habits of meditation and self-appreciation. p. 11.

At eighteen--one year after his father's death--he left home;\*\*\*\*\*He was guided to the town of Granville, Washington county, New York, where he engaged in manual labor for something like a year. During this year a revival of religion visited this town, and young Spencer was among its hopeful subjects. He made a public profession of religion soon after, in connection with the Congregational Church of Middle Granville,\*\*\*\*\*In pursuance of an education, he soon after entered the academy at Salem, in the same county, where he was fitted for college. While here he enjoyed the ministry and friendly counsels of Dr. Alexander Proudfit.\*\*\*\*\*



1822.

Ichabod Smith Spencer.

2.

While at the academy he sustained himself by teaching a portion of his time. His thirst for improvement at that time was great. He went through a course of medical reading with the student with whom he roomed at Salem, for the mere pleasure of acquiring knowledge. Here was the secret of his knowledge of medicine, which often surprised his friends, and which he turned to good account in his many visits to the poor.

He entered the sophomore class of Union College in 1819, and graduated in 1822, at the age of twenty-four. Nothing very marked occurred during his college life. He became known as a young man of decided talent. He stood high in his class in point of scholarship, and already wielded the pen of a ready writer. He left the college halls among the most promising.

At this period Dr. Spencer's mind seems to have been undecided in regard to the choice of a profession. He thought seriously of the Law, and devoted considerable time to reading law-books.\*\*\*\*\*He was called to take charge of the Grammar-School in Schenectady, where he remained three years.

This was an important post, and nobly did he sustain himself. He was enthusiastic and devoted as a teacher, and had he remained here would soon no doubt have risen to a professor's chair. President Nott highly appreciated his tact and ability as a teacher, and remarked, that he never ought to think of any other profession for life. He pronounced him one of the most thorough masters of the art he had ever known. He promised to use his influence to secure him a Professorship in Union College as soon as a vacancy should occur, or in some other, if he would wait.

So active was his mind and bent on acquisition, that, while discharging the duties of this onerous office, he engaged in the study of Theology under the direction of Dr. Andrew Yates, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Union College.\*\*\*\*\*While here he cultivated quite an extensive acquaintance with several Indian dialects.

But his fame as a teacher had gone abroad, and Canandaigua, in Western New York, was fortunate enough to secure his services as the Preceptor of her Academy. He removed thither in 1825.

The Academy, though richly endowed, and occupying a very important position, had greatly run down previous to his going there. He addressed himself to its resuscitation and improvement, with his characteristic zeal, industry and energy; and he quickly gave it new life, and raised it to a high degree of prosperity, and to a commanding position among the primary educational institutions of the State. He was celebrated here, as he had been in Schenectady, for his skill and success as a teacher of youth.



1822.

Ichabod Smith Spencer

3.

We have alluded to his poetic talent.\*\*\*\*\*He wrote at this time a Poem on Time, of two hundred lines, which appeared from the press of the village, in the form of "The Carrier's Address of the Ontario Repository."\*\*\*\*\*  
p.21

Dr. Ansel D. Eddy (Class of 1817) was the Pastor of the Congregational Church of Canandaigua while Mr. Spencer was engaged there in teaching. \*\*\*\*\*

While thus engaged in a most laborious occupation, Dr. Spencer so far completed his theological studies as to be licensed to preach the Gospel. He received his licensure in November, 1826, from the Presbytery of Geneva. \*\*\*he continued his employment in the Academy nearly two years after this, occupying some neighboring pulpit frequently on the Sabbath,\*\*\*\*\*

In May, 1828, Dr. Spencer was married to Miss Hannah Magoffin, youngest daughter of John Magoffin, Esq., of Albany, N. Y. Mrs. Spencer survives her husband. Four children--two sons and two daughters--also survive their father--\*\*\*\*\*

In the summer of 1828, Dr. Spencer received and accepted a call from the Congregational Church in Northampton, Mass, where he was ordained and installed as colleague-pastor with the venerable Williams, on the 11th of September following. \*\*\*\*\*His ministry of three and a half years at Northampton was characterized by unusual industry and energy,\*\*

On the 13th of February(1831) he requested the concurrence of his people in calling an ecclesiastical Council for his dismissal, and after repeated but unsuccessful efforts to retain him longer, they reluctantly yielded to his wishes, and on the 12th of March he was dismissed.

When it was known that he contemplated leaving Northampton, he received numerous overtures and calls from important churches in various places--two or three from Boston, and one from Brooklyn, to name no others. The call from the Park Street Church, Boston, was a very important one.\*\*\*\*\*  
He soon after accepted a call from the Second Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, New York, and removed there in the Spring of 1832.

He was installed as the first Pastor of this Church on the 23d of March, 1832, and remained its Pastor until his death.

In 1830 he was called to the Presidency of the University of Alabama; and in 1832 to the Presidency of Hamilton College. This last call was long and most seriously considered by him. \*\*\*\*This call was renewed in 1835.

He was again called to the Park Street Church of Boston in 1835. In 1833 he received a unanimous call to the Essex Street Church, Boston. While he had the Park Street Church call under consideration, he received a call from the Pine Street Church of Boston.



In 1853 he was elected to the Professorship of Pastoral Theology in East Windsor Theological Seminary, Conn. But he could not be induced to leave his Brooklyn church.

In 1836 he accepted the Professorship extraordinary of Biblical History in the Union Theological Seminary, New York City, and retained his connection with it for about four years. He was one of the founders and original directors of this Seminary of sacred learning. \*\*\*\*While the unfortunate division of the Presbyterian Church, or rather the tendencies of things growing out of it, and other considerations of a personal nature, finally induced him to withdraw from any active part in its directorship, and alienated in part his sympathies from it,\*\*\*\*\*

FROM: Sermons of Rev. Ichabod S. Spencer, D. D., with  
a Sketch of his Life by Rev. J. M. Sherwood.  
Vol. 1. ( in 2 vols.)  
M. W. Dodd  
New York, 1855.

Full page portrait.

#### Publications:

Comparative Claims of Home and Foreign Missions; a sermon preached in the Second Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, April 2, 1843. Brooklyn. Wilder. 1843. pamphlet.

Conflagration in the City of New York. N. Y. J. Post. 1836. Pamphlet.

Fugitive Slave Law. The Religious Duty of Obedience to Law; A Sermon presched in the Second Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, November 24, 1850. N. Y. M.W.Dodd, 1850. 31 pp.

The National Warning: A Sermon preached on the Sabbath after the Death of General William Henry Harrison, late President of the United States. N. Y. J. S. Taylor & Co. 1841. 42 pp.

A Pastor's Sketches; or, Conversations with Anxious Inquirers, Respecting the Way of Salvation. N. Y. M.W. Dodd. 1853.

ICHABOD S. SPENCER, D.D. '22

Died: In Brooklyn on Thursday evening, Nov. 23, at his residence, after a protracted and painful illness, Rev. I. S. SPENCER, D. D., in the 57th year of his age.

The funeral services will take place in the Second Presbyterian Church, Clinton St., of which he was the first and sole pastor, on next Sabbath afternoon, the 26th inst., at 2 o'clock. His relatives, friends, the congregation, and all who sympathize in this bereavement, are invited to attend, without further invitation.

N. Y. Daily Times

Nov. 25, 1854

Prof. Pearson's Scrap Book p. 61

Rev. Dr. Spencer, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Clinton Street, Brooklyn, expired at his residence yesterday, after a lingering illness.

Prof. Pearson's Scrap



CLASS OF 1822

ICHABOD S. SPENCER

Born 1798 at Rupert, Vt.

Union College 1822

The seventh ordained minister of the First Church, Northampton, 1828-32; During his pastorate here, 200 united with the church by profession. Thousands have read and admired his "Pastors' Sketches," destined to live when many other books will be forgotten.

Antiquities, Historicals & Graduates of Northampton p. 348

Rev. Solomon Clark

Northampton, Mass. 1882

Proceedings of the Regents.

Meeting of February 27, 1833.

By the Report of Hamilton College it appears, that the Rev. Henry Davis has resigned the office of President of the College, and the trustees have elected the Rev. Ichabod S. Spencer his successor, and hopes are entertained that he will accept the office.

p. 226

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Proceedings of the Trustees.

Sixty-fourth Meeting. March 13, 1833.

The Revd. Dr. Davis laid before the Board a letter from the Revd. Ichabod S. Spencer, dated Brooklyn, February 2, 1833, in which he states that, after mature deliberation, he felt constrained to decline the Presidency of Hamilton College.

P. 227

Documentary History of  
Hamilton College

Clinton, New York.  
Published by the College  
1922.



CLASS OF 1822

ICHABOD S. SPENCER

Was born at Rupert, Vt., July 23, 1798, studied at Salem Academy, and graduated at Union College in 1822. While teaching school at Schenectady and Canadaigua, N. Y., he studied theology under the direction of Dr. Andrew Yates, of Union College. He was first settled in the ministry in this town (Northampton, Mass.) as colleague with Mr. Williams, September 11, 1828. Here he remained but three and one-half years, but his labors were abundantly rewarded, 200 persons having been added to the church during that time. In February, 1832, he asked a dismission, which was granted with reluctance by the church and society, and his connection with it was dissolved March 12, 1837. He accepted a call to the Second Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., during the same year, where he remained till his death, which occurred November 23, 1854, at the age of 57. He published two volumes of pastoral sketches, which were quite popular. In 1855 appeared two volumes of his sermons, with portrait, and a sketch of his life, by Rev. J. M. Sherwood.

FROM An article of the "Ecclesiastical History of Hampshire County, Mass (The First Church and Parish of Northampton) in

History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts  
Vol. 1 p 207  
Published by Louis H. Everts  
Philadelphia, Pa.  
1879.



1822

ICHABOD S. SPENCER.

Death of Rev. Dr. Spencer.

The Rev. Ichabod S. Spencer, D.D., Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, corner of Clinton and Fulton-streets, Brooklyn, died in that city on the 23 ult, in the 57th year of his age. Dr. Spencer was a native of Rupert, Vt., and was fitted for college at the Academy in our place. The following notice of his death, taken from the New York Journal of Commerce, is a just tribute to the memory of an excellent man and devoted christian:

"Dr. Spencer had long and faithfully officiated as a pastor and was greatly beloved by his people, wherever in the providence of God, he was called to labor. The "pastor's Sketches" by his pen, embodying some of the results of his own ministry, (which was eminently successful,) is a work of permanent interest and value. Many of these narratives were a record of experiences during his ministry of several years at Northampton, Mass. A number of his sermons have been published, first and last, and many more ought to be. We trust they will be gathered into a volume or volumes, and given to the public.

"Dr. Spencer had been drooping for a number of months, and was withal a great sufferer. He is at rest now, in the fruition of the blest."

The Salem (N.Y.) Press  
Dec. 5, 1854.



ICHABOD S. SPENCER    Class of 1822

From Literary Notices, Harper's Magazine, Vol.II,p.139  
December,1850

A Pastor's Sketches, by Rev. ICHABOD S. SPENCER

(published by M. W. Dodd), is a unique volume, presenting a highly instructive record of the experience of the author, during an active and varied pastoral intercourse. The sketches, which are all drawn from real life, describe the mental operations under the influence of strong religious emotions, in a manner equally interesting to the psychologist and the theologian. Most of the instances related occurred at a period of unusual excitement, but they are free from any tincture of fanaticism, and may be studied to advantage by all who are interested in the moral and religious advancement of their fellow men. The author displays a remarkable insight into human nature, a strong attachment to the doctrines of the church of which he is a minister, a rare power of close, consecutive reasoning, which is used with great effect in disposing of skeptical objections, a fluency of language and a variety and aptness of illustration, that must always make him a master in the work of dealing with troubled, or erring, or diseased consciences. His volume can not fail to become a favorite on the table of the pastor, and, indeed, of all who are curious in the narratives of religious experience.

(H.A.L. Jan,1950.)

# ALUMNI LUNCHEON

12:40 P. M.

JUNE 10, 1939

Alumni Gymnasium

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PLEASE PRESENT THIS TICKET AT THE DOOR



The portrait  
of  
Ichabod  
Spencer, which  
was presented  
to the College  
in 1914, is on  
the North Wall  
in Hale  
House.

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Jan. 1941